

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help The Land

www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov

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Connecticut

February 2012

From the State Conservationist ...



Jay T. Mar

A Natural Resource Career

I'm happy to announce that this year we will roll out a series of conservation intern programs – one for high school students, the other for college students. At the same time, we will be creating more volunteer opportunities where folks can assist in implementing conservation while learning about the state's natural resources. All of this fits into our vision of *building leaders*.

I know all too well the importance of such programs, since I began as a conservation intern more than 30 years ago. I grew up around agriculture and because my hobbies included hunting, fishing, and camping, I developed an interest in natural resources. While in high school, I volunteered to assist conservation partners in planting trees. From there it wasn't a hard decision to apply for a college intern program with NRCS.

I spent the next two summers at an NRCS Plant Materials Center working with conservation plant covers. The summer after that I spent at an NRCS field office where I assisted producers in planning and implementing conservation on the land.

Every fall when I returned to college, I had amazing stories to tell my friends. It also made me a better student; because I knew what I wanted in a career ... I wanted to be a soil conservationist with NRCS. I wanted to join the other conservationists, resource planning specialists, scientists, engineers, administrative and public affairs support, and the many conservation partners in *helping people help the land*. I wanted to join the conservation family and make a difference.

So, 33 years later after working on conservation in many states and even Europe, I can honestly say I chose the right career path. And oh my, the stories I could share! Including telling you about the wonderful people I've met, and the knowledge of the natural resources I have attained through the years. And the best part of this happy story about my career isn't over yet. I now get the opportunity to work with the many fine NRCS professionals, conservation partners, and most importantly, the agricultural producers of the great State of Connecticut. It is a good day A resource day!

Jay

75
Years

A Legacy of Conservation
Helping People Help the Land

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NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS

If you are a woman or Hispanic farmer and believe you were improperly denied farm loan benefits by USDA between 1981 and 2000. You may be eligible for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: www.farmerclaims.gov

 United States
Department of
Agriculture

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Soil Takes a Starring Role at Exhibit

Contact Jacob Isleib 860.871.4040

"WE OFTEN ARE SO ENGAGED IN THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF OUR WORK IT BECOMES EASY TO MISS THE ART OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WORK PLACES. EXHIBITS LIKE MARGARET'S SURELY SERVE AS INNOVATIVE REMINDERS OF THE UNIQUE AESTHETIC OF NATURE -- SOIL IN PARTICULAR."

JACOB ISLEIB, SOIL SCIENTIST, NRCS-CONNECTICUT

The Show: *Swept Away: Ashes, Dust, and Dirt in Contemporary Art and Design*
The Artist: Margaret Boozer, DC metro area-based artist working in sculpture, ceramics, and "soil-centric art." <http://margaretboozer.com/exhibitions.html>

Source of

Artistic Medium: NRCS

In the past, artist Margaret Boozer collaborated with Dr. Del Fanning, Soil Science Professor at the University of Maryland. So when she had the idea for *Swept Away*, she contacted him again. This time Fanning referred her to Richard Shaw, former Project Leader of the New York City Soil Survey Project (and current State Soil Scientist in New Jersey).



The Soil Survey Team includes Connecticut NRCS soil scientists Donald Parizek (2nd from left), Debbie Surabian (3rd from left), and Jacob Isleib (2nd from right, standing)

Over the course of the NRCS soil survey program in New York City, over 200 correlation-boxes* were made. After finding out about them, Boozer was very interested in making them part of the exhibit. So with Shaw's assistance, she was able to gather all the boxes from the soon-to-be-closed Staten Island Office. As it happens, the Tolland 12-6 MLRA Soil Survey Office had recently *inherited* soil survey responsibilities for the New York City area under the MLRA restructuring and was housing all the records for that survey, as well as the paper records for the correlation boxes Boozer hoped to use in her art. Shaw contacted the 12-6 Office and asked for help in providing necessary documentation to Boozer to enable her to label the boxes.

After obtaining everything she needed, Boozer put together her masterpiece, and is getting ready for the exhibition, scheduled for February 7-August 12, 2012, at the Museum of Arts and Design, in New York City.

According to Isleib, "Outreach to nontraditional cooperators such as regional artists is a rare opportunity that helps to increase the visibility of our agency." The exhibit will coincide with the New York City Soil Survey – scheduled to be published to Web Soil Survey this summer (it will be the first SSURGO-certified urban survey that maps soils to a high level of detail for an entire metropolitan area). The staff of the 12-6 Office hopes visitors to this exhibit, in addition to general enjoyment, will direct their inspiration and curiosity toward exploring what products NRCS offers the urban community.

*Correlation boxes function as miniature soil profiles: separate small samples of horizons are divided in order by depth, and serve as a physical record of observed field profiles.

New MLRA Soil Survey Lab Up and Running!

Contact Donald Parizek 860.871.4044

A recent remodeling project at the Tolland State Office combined a storage room and a lavatory to create the new MLRA Soil Survey Lab.

This new lab will be used to conduct rudimentary soil analysis locally, which is an efficient way to avoid expensive shipping costs and time delays encountered when samples are shipped to the National Soil Survey Lab in Lincoln, Nebraska. That lab will still conduct full characterization and special analysis for the soil survey office, when necessary.



Earth team volunteer Diane Lambert processing rapid carbon soil samples in the new MLRA Soil Survey Lab

The Tolland lab will be helpful in collecting valuable physical, chemical, and biological soil properties to enhance our data base, the National Soils Information System (NASIS), from which soil interpretations are generated.

Specific analyses that will be performed at the new soils lab include soil 1:1pH, organic calcium chloride pH, bulk density, organic pyrophosphate color, moisture content, sieve analysis, and a test for the presence of carbonates. Two conductivity measurements associated with salinity levels in subaqueous and tidal marsh soils are also being investigated using the Tolland lab at the request of National Soil Survey headquarters. These methods include the 1:5 by volume EC and pore water EC methods and are included as part of the soil halinity project currently in progress. The new lab will also feature essential equipment including a water deionizer; drying racks; sieves; shakers; a vacuum pump; glassware such as beakers, graduated cylinders, and flasks; and a sample fridge and freezer for chemical analyses. For more information about soil laboratory procedures, see the Soil Survey Laboratory Methods Manual at:

ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NSSC/Lab_Methods_Manual/SSIR42_2004_print.pdf

The Tolland lab is currently being used to prepare soil samples for the Rapid Carbon Assessment Program, an agency strategic priority to assess the levels of soil carbon present across the United States. With expert assistance from Earth Team Volunteer Diane Lambert, the soil survey office staff has already been able to process over 200 soil samples. This will help alleviate the critical backlog being experienced at the University of Rhode Island's soil lab where Maggie Payne, Rhode Island's Resource Soil Scientist and MO 12 Rapid Carbon Coordinator, is working diligently to analyze thousands of samples to meet the March 2012 deadline.



Growing Farms in Your Community
CT Agriculture Commission Conference
Saturday, March 24
EastConn
376 Hartford Turnpike
Hampton, CT
9am to 3:30 pm
Cost: \$15- Includes Farm to Table Lunch
and Conference Materials

Topics will include:

- A welcome from CT Department of Agriculture Commissioner, Steve Revicz
- New programs and initiatives you need to know about
- Getting results from your agriculture commission (Expertise from Massachusetts)
- Assessing the market channel best suited for your farm profitability
- Connecting Farmers to Farmland
- Updates from Agriculture Commissions
- Resources for Agriculture Commissions: Helping farmers find the answers they need
- Food Systems: Helping your town consider agriculture in everything they do

If you would like more information about this conference, please contact Jennifer Kaufman, AGvocate Program Director at 860-450-6007 or at AGvocate@yahoo.com.

You're Invited to the

CT NRCS Black History Month Luncheon

Friday, February 10th from 12- 12:45pm

featuring guest speakers from the Norwich Free Academy. The event will be held at either the Norwich or Danielson service center. More details to come.

Please RSVP to Marissa Theve:
(860) 871-4018 or marissa.theve@ct.usda.gov



Connecticut Community Gardening Association Presents:

!!!FREE FILM SCREENING!!!
Donations Graciously Accepted

URBAN ROOTS

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2012

(Snowdate: Saturday March 17th, call (860) 212-8356 or visit www.ladybug.uconn.edu)

Berlin Peck Public Library
234 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT 06037
12 noon to 3 pm

COME JOIN US FOR:

- An earth-moving documentary — Learn how a large city found its agrarian roots!
- Gardening Advice/Community Discussion
- Free Seeds/Book Sales
- Information on Community Gardens in CT

For More Information Call

Marty Sienko, President, CT Community Gardening Association H(860) 688-7783 C(860)212-8356
www.ctcommunitygardening.org

Or

Dawn Pettinelli, UConn Soil Nutrient Testing Lab, (860) 486-4274, www.ladybug.uconn.edu

FREE! SEATING LIMITED TO 100! FREE!

Co-Sponsored by: The University of Connecticut Home & Garden Education Center, CT NOFA, Hartford Food System, Bridgeport Community Land Trust, The New Haven Land Trust, Knox Parks

Mar to Speak at CLCC Conference

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Connecticut State Conservationist Jay T. Mar has been invited to provide opening remarks at the 2012 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference, as well as provide an introduction for Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal.

During the lunchtime roundtable discussions, Mar will also serve as host of one session that will include a dialogue on NRCS's role with land trusts and the conservation community, and the Farm Bill.

The session, scheduled for March 24, 2012, will be held at Wesleyan University, in Middletown.

Exciting Upcoming Events!

Civil Rights Division Updates Webpage

In response to comments received from a customer service survey, the Civil Rights Division has addressed comments that many employees were either not able to locate, or were not aware of, their webpage – by revamping their site.

The screenshot displays the Civil Rights Division webpage layout. On the left, there is a navigation sidebar with sections for 'Browse By Audience', 'Browse By Location', and 'Browse By Subject'. The 'Browse By Subject' section includes links for Programs & Services, Technical Resources, Land Use, Soils, Water, Air, Plants & Animals, Energy, Climate Change, and People. The main content area features a purple header with 'Civil Rights' and a sub-header 'Civil Rights Division'. Below this is a photo of two people in a field, followed by a paragraph describing the Civil Rights Division's mission. To the right of the main content are three sidebar sections: 'About NRCS' with links to Leadership, History, Organization, Accountability, CDSI, Civil Rights, Legislative Affairs, and Public Affairs; 'Related Government Links' with links to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, EEOC, MSPB, ODEP, OGC, and DOJ; and 'Related Links' with links to the Employment Compliance Team, Program Compliance Team, and Outreach & Advocacy. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Program Compliance Team' link and a 'Local intranet' icon.

Changes include adding:

- A new *Spotlight* feature (located at the bottom of the page).
- A FAQs page
- An informative EEO case information page titled, “DID YOU KNOW”
- EEO Presentations
- Webinars
- Training
- In February, they will begin posting the CRD newsletter

Check out the new site at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/civilrights>.

News From Partners ...

USDA to Survey Farmers' Planting Intentions for 2012



Contact Dianne Johnson, New England Ag Statistics Service, 603.227.3134

How will the uncertain economy affect U.S. farmer's planting intentions in 2012? The agricultural survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will survey 82,000 farmers in March to ask such questions about the 2012 season.

"Each year, the agricultural industry watches for the results of the agricultural survey, which provides the first official estimates of U.S. farmers' planting intentions for 2012," said Gary Keough, director of the NASS New England Field Office. "When producers finalize their cropping and marketing plans,

the survey will be one of the most important sources of information for them," he added.

The survey will be mailed late February and ask producers to provide information about the types of crops they intend to plant and how many acres. NASS will compile and analyze the information and publish the results in a series of USDA reports, including the annual Prospective Plantings Report and quarterly Grain Stocks Report, both to be released on March 30, 2012. As with all NASS surveys, information is confidential by law. All reports are available on the web at www.nass.usda.gov.

USDA to Measure the Economic Well-Being of American Farms

Contact Rebecca , New England Ag Statistics Service, 603.227.3124

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will spend the next several months contacting farmers and ranchers across the nation to conduct the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). The results will serve as a baseline for numerous federal policies and programs that affect U.S. farms and farm families.

"ARMS is our primary tool for gauging the financial condition and production practices," said Gary Keough, Director, NASS New England Field Office. "By participating in this survey, New England farmers directly impact the decisions that affect them, their families, and their operations."

To obtain the most accurate data, NASS will reach out to nearly 35,000 producers nationwide, including 270 in New England,

between February and April. The survey asks producers to provide data on their operating expenditures, production costs, and household characteristics. "Decision makers from all facets of agriculture will use the information to answer questions and make important decisions concerning the economic viability of American agriculture, the rural economy, and other emerging issues," explained Keough. "That's why it's imperative for all farmers contacted by NASS to provide responses and help shape the future of U.S. agriculture." As with all NASS surveys, information provided by respondents is confidential by law.

The data gathered will be published in the annual Farm Production Expenditures Report in August. All NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

Ag Commissioner Announces New Farmland Restoration Program – *State Bond Commission Approves \$5 Million to Return Farmland to Production*

Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky recently announced the State Bond Commission has approved \$5 million in funding for the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's new Farmland Restoration Program.

Authorized by Public Act 11-1, the program provides matching grants of up to \$20,000 for restoration activities that increase the state's farmland resource base for agriculture, with an emphasis on prime and important farmland soils and human and livestock food production. They expect to be able to work with over 250 farms.

"Connecticut's agricultural sector is a critical component of the state's history and our economy, and we are committed to supporting efforts to preserve, protect and restore our farms," said Governor Malloy. "Over the past year we have worked hard to strengthen our economy, adding more than 9,000 jobs in the state in the last 13 months. Investing in farms and dairies and expanding their potential is part of Connecticut's economic recovery, and highlights our respect for our agricultural heritage."

Reviczky explained that a conservation plan or Farmland Restoration Program plan is required for participation. Plans are prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, while Farmland Restoration Program plans are prepared with assistance from the North Central Conservation District or other approved entities.

"Interested, eligible farmers should first submit an application to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture," said Reviczky. "We will evaluate the proposals and notify

applicants of acceptance or rejection. In the case of acceptance, we'll ask applicants to contact NRCS or NCCD for help preparing the appropriate plan." Approved funded applicants will have one year to complete the plan treatments.

The Department of Ag will give priority to projects targeting production of fruits and vegetables; will consider livestock, livestock feed, and support production second; and will give tertiary consideration to other uses based on land use and acreage to be restored for agricultural production.

Farmers can use the grants for a variety of restoration treatments including clearing and removal of trees, stumps, stones, and brush to create or restore agricultural use; installation of resource protection barriers to protect crop fields on restoration areas; restoration of shellfish beds or aquaculture ponds; and removal of invasive plants and hedgerow management for reclamation of overgrown fields, pastures, and meadows.

"This program is another component of our long-range plan to grow sustainable agriculture here in Connecticut," said Reviczky. "These grants will help reestablish the productive use of our state's prime and important agricultural lands while providing farmers an opportunity to enhance their businesses through increased production. That, in turn, will add jobs and contribute to the state's economic growth."

More information about the program, including an overview, application form, and checklist, is available on the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's website, www.CTGrown.gov (click on "Programs and Services"), or by calling 860-713-2511.

News You Can Use:



USDA *Small Steps to Health and Wealth™* Online Challenge

NRCS employees are invited to sign up for the USDA Small Steps to Health and Wealth Online Challenge Winter 2012. The Challenge is part of a national Cooperative Extension program developed to motivate Americans to take action to simultaneously improve their health and personal finances. The free, strictly voluntary, 6-week program is open to anyone who enrolls online. It will be held January 15-February 25, 2012.

To register, follow the Small Steps to Health and Wealth Online Challenge link available at the Rutgers website at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/sshw>. Click on "SSHW Online Individual challenges." Register an Account by creating a user name and password and download a simple one-page user's guide with instructions on how to proceed.

USDA Updates Plant Hardiness Zone Map

The 2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is based on the average annual minimum winter temperature, divided into 10-degree F zones.

For the first time, the map is available as an interactive GIS-based map, for which a broadband Internet connection is recommended, and as static images for those with slower Internet access. Users may also simply type in a ZIP Code and find the hardiness zone for that area.



The Naturalist's Niche

Working with the Groundhog's Predictions

Contact Charlotte Pyle 860.871.4066

Each year, the groundhog cautiously pokes her head out on February 2nd – Groundhog Day, Candelmas, Imbolc. Will winter continue another 6 weeks?

What winter? This year, Connecticut ground-hogs might be wondering if they somehow slept the year around to November.

Is it November?

- The sun angle is low, about the same angle on November 8th as it is on February 2nd.
- It is not warm, but the days really are not all that cold.
- The ground is not covered in snow.

Is it February?

- The leaves on the ground do not look fluffy and they no longer crunch underfoot.
- The oak trees are stripped bare of lingering leaves.
- Tall grass is bent over and mostly pale in color.
- The ground is cold and the lingering remnants of snow are slow to melt.

The groundhog waddles out of her burrow. She is not quite as wide as she was last Fall, but she is nowhere near as thin as she would be if she had slept the year around. It has *got* to be February.

But what a strange run-up to February. The groundhog dreamed she poked her nose out of her hole into a white world one day in January and then watched as a warm rain washed winter off the hillside. Temperatures in the 50s!

They say if the groundhog sees her shadow on February 2nd, winter will continue for six more weeks. If not, winter will soon come to an end. Does this relationship hold if there has not yet been a real winter?

You might not believe in the predictions of the groundhog. But it is nice to be able to have faith in some sort of predictions. This winter, not much has been predictable.

In truth, neither the weather, nor the world has ever been predictable. Yet, our strange winter is a novel one in my memory's 17 year span of Connecticut weather records. Ecologists use the word *novel* to mean *new and not resembling something formerly known* – novel climates, novel ecosystems. There are few textbooks on how to deal with novel conditions. For resource managers whose decisions are based on the idea that management actions lead to predictable outcomes, novel conditions are uncomfortable.

There is the notion that novel ecosystems are the result of human activities and thus humans should step up and *guide* the development of those ecosystems. This perhaps is an illusion of power. Certainly, human activity has influenced the ongoing climate change that ultimately will change our ecosystems. Certainly human activity has changed ecosystems by means of over-hunting, habitat loss, and intentional or unintentional introductions of new species. Does that mean that human management can now control these novel ecosystems?

Can site managers control long term climate change or control the novel weather conditions we are experiencing this particular winter? I don't think so. Likewise, I don't think we can control the development of novel ecosystems. Yet, while neither we, nor the ground hog, exert active guidance over winter's outcome, we human resource managers do have opportunities to *guide* or at least to *influence* outcomes in novel ecosystems.

For resource managers, where novel ecosystems are present, choosing what to encourage and what to discourage is something that must be done even while recognizing that we are unsure of the outcome. And, in the absence of predictability, on each site we would do well to pay attention to details and along the way be as responsive as possible to the small, site-specific outcomes.



NRCS 2012 Program Update

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) –AMA provides payments to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation practices into their farming operations. Producers may construct or improve water management structures or irrigation structures, and mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - CRP reduces soil erosion and sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. *CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency, with NRCS providing technical land eligibility determinations, conservation planning, and practice implementation.*

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) –A voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) –EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial incentives to producers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers and ranchers meet federal, state, Tribal, and local environmental regulations.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) –A voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) - A voluntary program for landowners and operators to protect, restore, and enhance grassland. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations; enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity; and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conversion.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) –A voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. Includes 30-year and permanent easement options and funding for restoration.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) –WHIP is a voluntary program for private landowners to develop and improve high quality habitat that supports wildlife populations of national, state, Tribal, and local significance.

Office Locations

Danielson Field Office
71 Westcott Road
Danielson, CT 06238
860.779.0557
Raymond Covino
District Conservationist

Norwich Field Office
Yantic River Plaza
238 West Town St.
Norwich, CT 06360
860.887.3604
Javier Cruz
District Conservationist

Torrington Field Office
1185 New Litchfield St.
Torrington, CT 06790
860.626.8258
Kathleen Johnson
District Conservationist

Hamden Field Office
51 Mill Pond Road
Hamden, CT 06514-1703
(203) 287-8038
Diane Blais
District Conservationist

Windsor Field Office
100 Northfield Dr. 4th Floor
Windsor, CT 06095
860.688.7725
James Hyde
District Conservationist

Tolland State Office
344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland, CT 06084
860.871.4011
Jay T. Mar
State Conservationist

Calendar of Events

February

- 3 **OWL PROWL AT EARLE PARK** – Audubon Society at Glastonbury – 7-8 PM – Join teacher and naturalist Kasha Breau on a walk behind the Audubon Center. Weather is no deterrent. Members \$8/person, Nonmembers/\$10
- 4 **KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL GOAT MANAGEMENT** – Putnam Library – 2-4 PM – Veterinarian Dennis Thibeault will discuss nutrition and how proper feeding and management are the keys to your animal's health. He will explore the inter-relationship of nutrition to successful milk production, healthy kids, parasite control, bloot prevention, etc. Registration required. Contact 860.974.9012 or docdennis@peoplepc.com
- 4 **NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE WINTER FESTIVAL** – Black Rock State Park, Watertown – 9 AM – 3 PM - Activities will include ice fishing, fish stocking, snowshoeing, marshmallow roasting and much more! Contact *Rachael Sunny (860) 418-5981*
- 4 **ICE FOR SALE** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 10:30 AM – 12 Noon – Join Bob McClellan from the Great Burnside Ice Co. for a special look at the history of ice harvesting and trade in Connecticut. Contact *Donna Kingston 203.734.2513*
- 4 **WINTER TRAILS WORKSHOP** – Connecticut Forest & Park, Rockfall – 9 AM – 3 PM - The workshop provides new trail maintainers and managers a comprehensive introduction to CFPA's trails program, trail techniques, signage and blazing, trail tools and volunteer management. Open to the public. Bring your own lunch. Space is limited – RSVP to tpeters@ctwoodlands.org.
- 4 **WINTER WALK** – Earthplace, Westport – 2:30 PM – Take a trail walk with naturalist Pete Fraboni and learn how to identify trees in winter their bark, branches, and shape. Contact *Earthplace 203.227.7253*
- 4 **HOUSATONIC RIVER ZEBRA MUSSEL FORUM: Slowing the Threat of Zebra Mussels in the Housatonic Watershed** – Bard College at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington, MA – 9:15 AM – 3:45 PM – Space is limited. Contact Dennis Regan dregan@hvatoday.org
- 6 **CONNECTICUT FARM ENERGY & ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP** – Rural Development, Windsor – 2-4 PM - Topics include Connecticut Farm Energy Program; USDA-RD – REAP Grants; USDA-NRCS – EQIP Program; Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund; Clean Energy Finance & Investment Authority; Connecticut Farm Bureau Association; Professional Energy Installers. Some workshops may not have presentations from each of the groups listed above, but information will be available about each program. Contact (860) 345-3977 or ctfarmenergy@aol.com
- 8 **CONNECTICUT FARM ENERGY & ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP** – UConn Extension, Haddam – 6-8 PM - Topics include Connecticut Farm Energy Program; USDA-RD – REAP Grants; USDA-NRCS – EQIP Program; Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund; Clean Energy Finance & Investment Authority; Connecticut Farm Bureau Association; Professional Energy Installers. Please register at least one week before workshop. Contact (860) 345-3977 or ctfarmenergy@aol.com
- 8 **TRANSITION LITCHFIELD FILM SERIES *HERE COMES THE SUN!*** – Litchfield Community Center – 7 PM – Documentary highlights efforts to use the sun as a source of energy. The film examines some of the barriers to solar. Refreshments at 6:30, film at 7 PM, followed by discussion 7:50 PM. Contact *Barbara Putnam 860.567.4465*
- 9 **EXPLORE EXPORTING: THE WORLD IS WAITING** (a seminar on why to export) – Northeast Utilities, Berlin - Have you considered exporting? Are you wondering if it's something your business should consider. Join us for this free seminar to learn the benefits of exporting and the services available to assist you with the process. Contact *Jaime Smith 860.713.2559* or jaime.smith@ct.gov
- 9 **GOOD FOOD SAFETY PLAN WORKSHOP** – New Haven County Extension Center, North Haven – 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM – Program updates, review of food safety plans, presentation of templates. Free. Pre-registration required. Contact *Diane Wright Hirsch 203.407.3163* or diane.hirsch@uconn.edu
- 15-17, 21-22 **THE ACCREDITATION COURSE IN ORGANIC LAND CARE** – Connecticut Ag Experiment Station, New Haven – Course for professionals will provide the education needed for an understanding of organic land care design and maintenance. Based on NOFA's Standards for Land Care: Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes. Contact *Deb Legge 203.888.5146* deb@ctnofa.org
snowdate
23
- 18 **HOW TO PLAN FOR A BOUNTIFUL VEGETABLE GARDEN** – Common Ground High School, New Haven – 10 AM – 1 PM – Basic principles of planning for organic vegetable and flower gardens. Choosing the site and style, soil testing, and improvements, choosing the right vegetables for the season, crop rotation, and companion planting will be covered. Sponsored by CT NOFA. \$10/person. Contact 203.888.5146
- 18 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 9 AM - Come observe birds in the wild, sharpen your bird identification skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds of the Kellogg Environmental Center and Osbornedale State Park. Contact *Donna Kingston 203.734.2513*

February *(continued)*

- 18 WINTER WALK AND TALK AT GOODWIN** – Goodwin State Forest, Hampton – 10 AM - Ever wonder how Connecticut's critters cope with the cold? Join Joshua's Trust and naturalist Juan Sanchez on a guided walk through Goodwin State Forest in Hampton. Sanchez will illustrate survival techniques described in Bernd Heinrich's "Winter World," (available at most local bookstores). Refreshments will follow. Free, but pre-registration is required. Contact juan.sanchez@ct.gov.
- 20 HOLIDAY – PRESIDENT'S DAY**
- 21 IMPACTS OF INVASIVE SPECIES ON OUR FORESTS** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 7:30 PM - The impacts of invasive species on our forests – and how to control them. Talk will explain the negative effects of invasive species on wildflowers, tree seedlings, and water quality and the link between invasives and increased risk of exposure to Lyme disease. Contact [Donna Kingston 203.734.2513](tel:203.734.2513)
- 23 BIRDS OF PREY** – Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill – 1 PM - Sharon Audubon bird program featuring live Hawks and Owls. Contact [Margaret Enkler at 860-529-5816](tel:860.529.5816)
- 24 ETHICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PROJECT LEARNING TREE WORKSHOP** – Connecticut Forest & Park, Rockfall – 9 AM – 3 PM – Geared toward Grade 6-12 educators and youth leaders. Project Learning Tree (PLT) enhances critical thinking, problem solving, and effective decision-making skills, teaching students to weigh various sides of an environmental issue to make informed and responsible decisions.. Fee: \$40. Contact [860.346.TREE](tel:860.346.346) or visit ctwoodlands.org
- 25 BLUEBIRD PROGRAM AND HOUSE BUILDING** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 10:30 AM – 12 Noon - Learn the status of bluebirds and the ways you can help monitor not only them, but also fellow native cavity nesters. Bluebird natural history will be provided and followed by an opportunity to build a bluebird nest box. Contact [Donna Kingston 203.734.2513](tel:203.734.2513)
- 25 BLUEBIRDS WITH MASTER WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST FRED LOWMAN** – Sessions Woods, Burlington – 1:30-2:30 PM - Join Fred Lowman for an informative discussion on bluebirds. Hear Fred's success stories on attracting bluebirds to his property. Contact [Laura E. Rogers-Castro 860.675.8130](tel:860.675.8130)
- 26-28 2013 HARVEST NEW ENGLAND AG MARKETING CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW** - Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA – Conference will focus on marketing your farm and farm products. Contact [Jaime Smith 860.713.2559](tel:860.713.2559) or jaime.smith@ct.gov; or visit www.harvestnewengland.org
- 27 GOOD FOOD SAFETY PLAN WORKSHOP** – Tolland County Extension Center, Vernon – 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM – Program updates, review of food safety plans, presentation of templates. Free. Pre-registration required. Contact [Diane Wright Hirsch 203.407.3163](tel:203.407.3163) or diane.hirsch@uconn.edu

March

- TBD SPRING AMPHIBIAN WALK** – St. Luke's School, New Canaan – March is a magical time to search for frogs and salamanders! Dave Havens of Norwalk River Watershed Association will give a short introduction on amphibians and how to spot them; followed by a woodland walk to visit vernal ponds coming to life with salamanders, newts, frogs, and toads. Search for eggs; learn about seasonal habitats, life history, and some of the many species that live in the area. Check website for date. Contact [1.877.NRWA.INFO](tel:1.877.NRWA.INFO)
- 1 NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION ACADEMY** – University of Connecticut – Application deadline for this week-long training in land use stewardship for sophomore and junior high school students in Connecticut. Contact [Charlotte Rand 860.486.4917](tel:860.486.4917), nrca@uconn.edu, or visit www.nrca.uconn.edu
- 3 CONNECTICUT NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMER'S ASSOCIATION (NOFA) 30th ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE** – Manchester Community College – 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM – Keynote speaker – international bestselling author Jeffrey M. Smith. Contact [203.888.5146](tel:203.888.5146)
- 5 CONNECTICUT FARM ENERGY & ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP** – UConn Extension, Torrington – 10 AM – 12 Noon - Topics include Connecticut Farm Energy Program; USDA-RD – REAP Grants; USDA-NRCS – EQIP Program; Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund; Clean Energy Finance & Investment Authority; Connecticut Farm Bureau Association; Professional Energy Installers. Some workshops may not have presentations from each of the groups listed above, but information will be available about each program. Please register at least one week before workshop. Contact [\(860\) 345-3977](tel:860.345.3977) or ctfarmenergy@aol.com
- 7 CONNECTICUT FARM ENERGY & ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP** – RD Office, Norwich – 4-6 PM - Topics include Connecticut Farm Energy Program; USDA-RD – REAP Grants; USDA-NRCS – EQIP Program; Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund; Clean Energy Finance & Investment Authority; Connecticut Farm Bureau Association; Professional Energy Installers. Some workshops may not have presentations from each of the groups listed above, but information will be available about each program. Please register at least one week before workshop. Contact [\(860\) 345-3977](tel:860.345.3977) or ctfarmenergy@aol.com

March (continued)

- 7 **NOFA HOMEOWNERS WORKSHOPS ON ORGANIC LAWN CARE:** Green Up Your Yard with Organic Land and Lawn Care: Save Money and the Environment: A Workshop for Homeowners – Hamden Public Library – 7:00-8:30 PM - These informative workshops will provide the tools and resources needed to practice organic lawn and landscape care, the benefit of organic land care, as well as information on finding a landscaper who has the knowledge to maintain lawns and landscapes organically. Contact Clara 203.888.5146 or visit organiclandcare.net
- 9 **GROWING FRUIT IN A HEALTHY ORCHARD ECOSYSTEM** – Connecticut Forest & Park, Rockfall – 9 AM – 4:30 PM - Full-day program with orchard health expert Michael Phillips will discuss the primary role of orchardists; which is to build system health creating the most favorable conditions for the production of delicious, healthy fruits. Morning/early afternoon session in classroom. End of day is a walk thru High Hill Orchard learning what the trees have to tell. Lunch included. For more info, visit www.HerbsAndApples.com and www.GrowOrganicApples.com.
- 9 **KAYAKING IN AND AROUND THE NORWALK ISLANDS BOOK SIGNING AND DISCUSSION** by David Park – Rowayton Library, Norwalk – 7:00-8:30 PM. Hear all about kayaking the area between Darien and Westport including local rivers, coast and islands off-shore. Information on kayak safety and island nesting birds will also be discussed and an 18 foot sea-kayak and gear will be on display courtesy of the Outdoor Sports Center of Wilton. Contact NRWA 877-NRWA-INFO
- 10 **SOILS AND COMPOST WORKSHOP** – Common Ground High School, New Haven – 10 AM – 1 PM – The basics of building great soil in gardens and in the compost pile. Demonstrations of composting skills, as well as great handouts will be available. Sponsored by CT NOFA. \$10/person. Contact 203.888.5146
- 13 **NOFA HOMEOWNERS WORKSHOPS ON ORGANIC LAWN CARE:** Green Up Your Yard with Organic Land and Lawn Care: Save Money and the Environment: A Workshop for Homeowners – Cheshire Public Library – 7:00-8:30 PM - These informative workshops will provide the tools and resources needed to practice organic lawn and landscape care, the benefit of organic land care, as well as information on finding a landscaper who has the knowledge to maintain lawns and landscapes organically. Contact Clara 203.888.5146 or visit organiclandcare.net
- 17 **STARTING SEEDLINGS** – Common Ground High School, New Haven – 10 AM – 12 PM – We invite you to learn about starting your own vegetables and flowers from seed. Demonstrations for both planting and transplanting, plus a list of which plants are set out by seedlings and which ones are directly sown by seed into the ground. Sponsored by CT NOFA. \$10/person. Contact 203.888.5146
- 17 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8 AM - Come observe birds in the wild, sharpen your bird identification skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds of the Kellogg Environmental Center and Osbornedale State Park. Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513
- 20 **FIELD CRAFT FOR BIRDERS** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 7:30 PM - This program will focus on "Fieldcraft", the field practices and specialist skills for observing birds at close range. Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513
- 20 **KAYAKING IN AND AROUND THE NORWALK ISLANDS BOOK SIGNING AND DISCUSSION** by David Park – New Canaan Library – 7:00-8:30 PM. Hear all about kayaking the area between Darien and Westport including local rivers, coast and islands off-shore. Information on kayak safety and island nesting birds will also be discussed and an 18 foot sea-kayak and gear will be on display courtesy of the Outdoor Sports Center of Wilton. Contact NRWA 877-NRWA-INFO
- 20 **GOOD FOOD SAFETY PLAN WORKSHOP** – New Haven Extension Center, North Haven – 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM – Program updates, review of food safety plans, presentation of templates. Free. Pre-registration required. Contact Diane Wright Hirsch 203.407.3163 or diane.hirsch@uconn.edu
- 24 **CT AGRICULTURE COMMISSION CONFERENCE: Growing Farms in Your Community – An AGvocate Conference** – EastConn, Hampton – 9 AM – 3:30 PM – Topics include new programs and initiatives; getting results from your agriculture commission; assessing the market channel best suited for your farm profitability; connecting famers to farmland; Helping Farmers Find the Answers they Need; and Food Systems: Helping your town consider agriculture in everything they do. Featured speaker Commissioner Steve Reviczky, Connecticut Department of Agriculture. Contact Jennifer Kaufman 860.450.6007 or AGvocate@yahoo.com
- 24 **CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE** – Wesleyan University, Middletown - Conference features an inspiring keynote speaker; over 25 workshops covering a range of topics directly affecting citizens and environments across Connecticut; poster and displays from member organizations and conservation partners; unique opportunity for participants to network with their peers from around the state; and annual recognition of excellence in conservation in the areas of stewardship, collaboration, fundraising and outreach and land acquisition. For more information visit www.ctconservation.org/

April

- 1 **TURN THE CORNER WALK/RUN** – Sherwood Island State Park, Westport – 11 AM – 2 PM - Please join us in the fight against Lyme disease and tick-borne diseases for our 4th Annual Fundraiser Walk/Run to Turn the Corner on Lyme on behalf of Turn the Corner Foundation. Early registration fees: \$25 pp/ \$70 per family, children under 10, free. Onsite registration fees are \$35 pp, \$80 per family and children under 10/free. Contact Orna Grand 646.450.4882
- 12 **BIRDS OF PREY** – Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill – 1 PM - Massachusetts Birds of Prey program featuring live hawks, owls and an eagle. *Contact Margaret Enkler at 860-529-5816*
- 12 **KAYAKING IN AND AROUND THE NORWALK ISLANDS BOOK SIGNING AND DISCUSSION** by David Park – Ridgefield Library – 7:00-8:30 PM. Hear all about kayaking the area between Darien and Westport including local rivers, coast and islands off-shore. Information on kayak safety and island nesting birds will also be discussed and an 18 foot sea-kayak and gear will be on display courtesy of the Outdoor Sports Center of Wilton. Contact NRWA 877-NRWA-INFO
- 14 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8 AM - Come observe birds in the wild, sharpen your bird identification skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds of the Kellogg Environmental Center and Osbornedale State Park. *Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513*
- 17 **WONDERFUL WORLD OF LICHENS** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 7:30 PM - An introductory lecture where participants learn to recognize different lichen forms and structures, their ecology, habitat requirements and ancient and modern uses. *Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513*
- 19 **LIVE REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS SHOW** – Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill – 11 AM – 12:30 PM - A program with a variety of live reptiles and amphibians. *Contact Margaret Enkler 860.529.5816*

May

- 5 **ORGANIC GARDENING WORKSHOP** – Common Ground High School, New Haven – 10 A – 12 PM – Instructions and seasonal tips on what can be planted in your garden now and what must wait for warmer weather. Learn how to prep your garden beds, plan your plantings, deal with early garden pests, and improve soil fertility using organic methods. Sponsored by CT NOFA. \$10/person. *Contact 203.888.5146*
- 12 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8 AM - Come observe birds in the wild, sharpen your bird identification skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds of the Kellogg Environmental Center and Osbornedale State Park. *Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513*
- 24 **2012 CONNECTICUT ENVIROTHON** – Winding Trails, Farmington – *Contact Margie Faber 860.871.4040*
- 28 **HOLIDAY – MEMORIAL DAY**

June

- 9 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8 AM - Come observe birds in the wild, sharpen your bird identification skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds of the Kellogg Environmental Center and Osbornedale State Park. *Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513*
- 23 **GREAT AMERICAN CAMP OUT** – www.backyardcampout.org

July

- 4 **HOLIDAY – 4TH OF JULY**